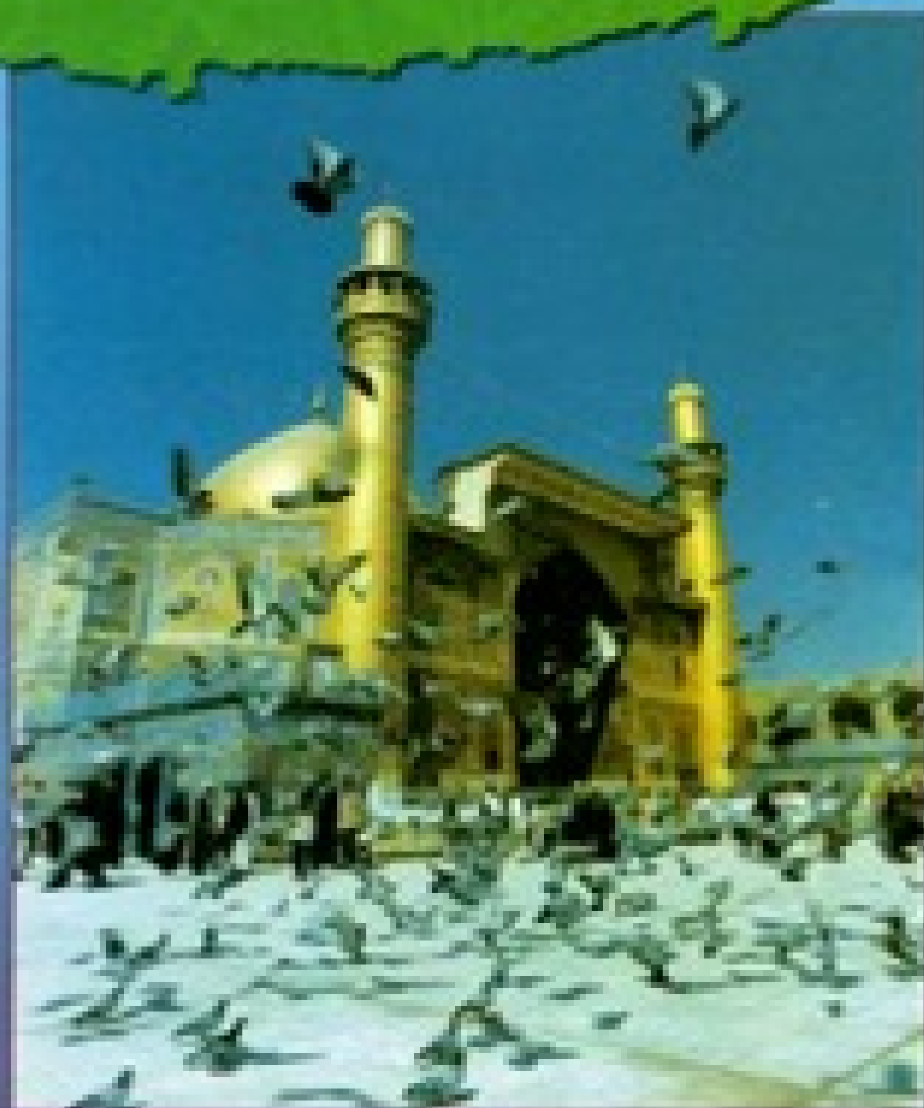


DISCOVERING SHI‘I ISLAM

By Mohammad Ali Shomali

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point

Discovering Shi'i Islam is a brief introduction to main issues related to Islam in general and Shi'i Islam in particular. Though simply and clearly written, it is an outcome of more than twenty years of involvement in Islamic studies. The text studies the origins of Shi'i Islam and its sources, i.e. the Qur.an, the Sunnah, the reason and consensus. It also studies fundamental doctrines and main practices of Islam. It ends with a brief account of the latest statistics about the present Muslim population of the world along with a breakdown of religious affiliations of some countries with a long history of Shi'i presence therein. Discovering Shi'i Islam represents a sincere commitment to Islamic unity and is hoped to serve as a modest step towards Muslim brotherhood. Indeed, this book echoes the Qur'anic call for unity which extends to all people of faith to unify .their efforts and concentrate on their common ground

Introduction

In the Name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all worlds

The present work is in large a summarized version of Shi'i Islam: Origins, Faith and

Practices (۲۰۰۳, ICAS Press) by the same author. This shorter version aims to briefly address main issues related to Islam in general and Shi'i Islam in particular. These two works represent a modest attempt to fill some of the gaps that exist in the field of .Islamic studies in general, and Shi'i studies in particular

Though simply and clearly written, they are outcomes of more than twenty years of involvement in Islamic studies, and based to some extent on two series of lectures about Shi'i Islam delivered to English audiences: a first set of some fifty lectures delivered at Jami'at al-Zahra (the leading Islamic Seminary for Women) in Qum, Iran in ۱۹۹۵ and ۱۹۹۶, and a second set of some thirty lectures delivered at the Manchester .Islamic Institute and the Shi'a Welfare Centre in Manchester, England in ۱۹۹۸ and ۱۹۹۹

The first chapter begins by expounding both the literal and technical meanings of the term Shi'a", and references are made to statements of famous scholars in this regard. .Then it proceeds to study the origins of Shi'i Islam and how it came into existence

The second chapter studies the sources of Shi'i thought, i.e. the Qur'an, the Sunnah, the reason and consensus. Discussing the status of the Qur'an, the chapter goes on to establish that the Shi'a like other Muslims believe that the Qur'an which is present today is an embodiment of Divine revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. The chapter continues by explaining the second most important source, i.e. the Sunnah, which

.includes the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad

The Qur'an itself asks Muslims to take the Prophet as their role model, to refer to him to judge and settle their conflicts, and speaks of the Prophet as the one who recites, teaches and explains the Qur'an. In this chapter there is also a discussion about the household of the Prophet (Ahlul Bayt) and their role in presenting the Sunnah. Then there follows a discussion about the importance of the reason and its role in understanding Islamic beliefs, values and practical laws. Finally there is a discussion about legal consensus (al-ijm,') and how it is viewed with respect to the Sunnah in the .Shi'i perspective

The third chapter studies fundamental doctrines of the Shi'i faith. Along with Unity of God, prophethood and resurrection which constitute the Principles of Religion (Islam and other Divine religions), some important additional doctrines such as Divine justice and imamate are studied. These doctrines may partly be shared by other Muslims, but .the Shi'a are those who believe in all of them

The fourth chapter is a very brief account of Shi'i practices along with brief reference to the objectives and principles underlying them. These practices are in principle shared by all Muslims, though there may be some differences in particulars among .different Islamic schools

The fifth and final chapter is a short discussion about the Shi'a world today. This chapter starts with a brief account of the latest statistics about the present Muslim and Shi'i population of the

world. There is also a breakdown of religious affiliations of some countries with a long history of Shi'i presence therein. Though there are no accurate and approved statistics on the current Shi'a population in the world, efforts have been made here to .collect the best available

I should also note that the author is sincerely and wholeheartedly committed to Islamic unity and hopes that this work can serve as a modest step towards Muslim brotherhood. In fact, one of the best means in achieving this unity and brotherhood is to know each other and to overcome the historical prejudices that prevent objective understanding between each other. According to an Arabic proverb, "People are .–"enemies of what they ignore

A careful study of all major Islamic schools shows that what they have in common is much more than what the y differ. All Muslims believe in the same God, the same Prophet and the same Qur'an. They all believe in the Day of Resurrection and Divine rewards and punishments. They all say their daily prayers towards the same .direction, that is, Mecca. They all fast the whole month of Ramadan

They all perform pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) at the same time. They all believe in giving alms, enjoining the good and prohibiting the bad. They all believe that they should make friends with the people of faith and good intention and get away from enemies .of God. They all adhere to the same virtues and values

According to the Qur'an, all believers are

brothers". Regardless of their colour, race, gender, and denomination, there are" certain duties towards each other that faith brothers and sisters must discharge. Once Mu'alla b. Khunays asked Imam Sadiq about what one Muslim owes another. Imam replied: "There are seven duties incumbent upon him. Should he neglect but one of them, he is not a friend or a servant of God, and truly he has done nothing for :the sake of God". Then Imam mentioned the following

a) Wish for your brother what you wish for yourself, and wish that what you do not .desire for yourself should not befall your brother

.b) Do not make your brother angry, but seek to please him and obey his wishes

.c) Help him with your soul, your tongue, your hands and your feet

.d) Be his eye to see by, his guide and his mirror

e) Do not eat your fill when he is hungry, nor drink and clothe yourself when he is .thirsty and naked

f) If he has no servant, but you do, it is incumbent on you to send your servant to him .to wash his clothes, cook his food and spread out his mattress

g) Accept his promise and his invitation; visit him when he is sick, attend his funeral, (and see to his needs before he asks you, hurrying to do them if you can.(۱

Unfortunately, there have always been some short-sighted people among each group or sect who have tried to magnify the differences and have called for separation instead of unity

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Muzaffar, pp. ۷۶ ۷۷ -۱

and brotherhood. They hasten to find some excuses to call anyone who disagrees with them a k,fir (disbeliever) or a mushrik (polytheist) and any act that does not please them bid'ah (heresy). Of course, there are disbelievers and there are heretics, .but one must be very cautious in applying these terms

Great Islamic leaders and scholars, whether they be Sunni or Shi'a, have never attached these labels to each other. In this way, they have represented in their fatwas, sayings and deeds the real spirit of Islam, this harmonious and universal .message of peace, justice, unity and mercifulness

Islam brought unity and solidarity for those who suffered a lot from enmity and hostility (۳:۱۰۳). This act of unifying people is highly esteemed as a Divine act (۸:۶۳). On the contrary, it was the action of people such as Pharaoh to disunite people (۲۸:۴). The Qur'an warns believers that if they start conflicting each other they will weaken and they will, therefore, be defeated (۸:۴۶). In fact, the call for unity is not limited to Muslims. The Qur'an invites all people of faith such as Christians and Jews to unify .(their efforts and concentrate on their common ground (۳:۶۴

Let us hope and pray that day by day this sense of unity and solidarity becomes .stronger and intensifies

At the end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals and organisations that have encouraged me, especially Ayatullah Muhsin Araki, Islamic College for Advanced Studies and the Ahlul Bayt Assembly of

UK and the Republic of Ireland in London. Last but certainl y not least, I would like to express my feelings of deep gratitude to God for all His favours that He has bestowed .upon us in the past and in the present

Mohammad A. Shomali

Ramadan ۱۴۲۳, November ۲۰۰۲

Chapter ۱: Origins of Shi'i Islam

The meaning of the term Shi'a

In Arabic, the term "Shi'ah" originally means one, two or a group of followers. In the Glorious Qur'an, this term is used several times in this sense. For example, in the verse (۲۸:۱۵) God speaks of one of the followers of Moses as one of his Shi'a. .(Elsewhere, Abraham is introduced as a Shi'a of Noah (۳۷:۸۳

In the beginning of the history of Islam, the term "Shi'a" was used in its original or literal sense for followers of different people. For example, some hadiths speak of the Shi'a of Ali b. Abi Talib and others of the Shi'a of Mu'awiyah b. Abi Sufyan. However, gradually the term acquired a secondary or technical meaning, i.e. the followers of Ali, .(those who believed in his Imamate (divine leadership

Shahrestani (d. ۵۴۸ A.H) in his Al-Milal wa al-Nihal, an outstanding source about different sects in Islam, writes, " Shi'a are those who followed Ali in particular and believed in his Imamate and caliphate according to the explicit teachings and will of (the Prophet Muhammad."(۱

This is a very accurate definition, since the Shi'a themselves believe that the reason for following Ali is that it was required by the Prophet and it was not their personal decision

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Shahres tani, Vol. ۱, p. ۱۴۶ -۱

to choose whom to follow, unlike the non- Shi'a who, after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, followed the one who was chosen at Saqifah and believed that the Prophet had left it to the people themselves to decide whom to follow.

Of course, Abu Bakr b. Abi Quhafah, the first Caliph, who himself was chosen in this way, believed that he must appoint his successor. And the second Caliph, 'Umar b. Khattab, in turn appointed a council of six people to choose one amongst themselves according to a very strict procedure set up by him. It is interesting to note that it was Ali, the fourth Caliph, who was chosen and indeed forced by nearly all Muslims after the murder of the third Caliph, 'Uthman b. 'Affan, to undertake the position of caliphate.

In his Firaq al-Shi'ah, al-Hasan b. Musa al-Nawbakhti (d. ٣١٣ A.H), a well-known Shi'a scholar, writes, "the Shi'a are the party of Ali b. Abi Talib. They were called ' Shi'a' of Ali during and after the life of the Prophet and are known as the followers of Ali and believers in his Imamate".(١)

Shaykh al-Mufid (d. ٤١٣ A.H), one of the most outstanding early Shi'a scholars, defines the Shi'a as being those who follow Ali and believe in his immediate successorship to the Prophet. (٢) Explaining why Shi'a are also called "Imamiyah", he says: "This is a title for those who believe in the necessity of Imamate and its continuit y in all ages, and that

١- Al-Nawbakhti, p. ١٧.
٢- See al-Mufid, p. ٣٦.

(every Imam must be explicitly designated, and must also be infallible and perfect.”(١)

Thus, it can be said that Shi’a Muslims are those who have the following beliefs about the successorship to the Prophet Muhammad:

a. Successorship to the Prophet is a Divine position.

b. As the Prophet was chosen by God, his successor or Imam also must be chosen by God and then made known by the Prophet.

c. The immediate successor to the Prophet Muhammad was Ali.

When did Shi'ism start?

Naturally the question arises as to when Shi’ism started. There are many hadiths narrated by both Shi’a and non- Shi’a regarding the issue of Imamate that will be studied later when discussing Shi’i doctrines. In what follows, however, we will just study some hadiths in which the Prophet Muhammad spoke of a group of people as “Shi’a” (followers) of Ali and then refer to some extra reasons from hadiths and the history of Islam that can shed more light on the subject at hand.

All hadiths mentioned below are cited from respected Sunni sources. These are, however, a few of the most important narrations, and there are many more to be found in the sources mentioned here as well as others.

(١) Ibn 'Asakir (d. ٥٧١ A.H.) narrated from Jabir b. 'Abdullah al-Ansari that he said:

Once we were with the Prophet Muhammad, when Ali arrived, upon which the Prophet said, 'I swear by Him who has my life in His hand that surely this man and his Shi’a will be happy on the Day of Resurrection and

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١- Ibid, p. ٣٨.

then the verse “Surely those who believe and do good deeds are the best of men” (۹۸:۷) was revealed. Later, whenever the companions of the Prophet Muhammad saw (Ali coming, they would say, “The best of men has come”.(۱)

Ibn Hajar (d. ۹۷۴) narrated from Ibn Abbas that when the verse (۹۸:۷) was revealed (۲) the Prophet told Ali: “Those are you and your Shi’a. You and your Shi’a will come on the day of Resurrection while you will be pleased and well pleasing (to God) and your enemies will come while they will be angry and seized by their necks”. (Ibn Hajar, (Section ۱۱, Chapter ۱, the Verse ۱۱)(۲)

:Ibn al-Athir (d. ۶۰۶) narrated that, addressing Ali, the Prophet said (۳)

O Ali! You and your Shi'a will reach God being pleased with Him and well pleasing" Him, and your enemies will reach Him, being angry and will be seized by their necks". Then the Prophet demonstrated how this would be by putting his hand on his neck. ("(Ibn al-Athir, Al-Nihayah, the entry "qa-ma-ha

There are other hadiths in which the Prophet Muhammad, addressing Ali, used the expression "our Shi’a". This is in line with what was asserted above that the Shi’a are those who follow Ali, in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet and not because of their own personal decision. For example, Ibn 'Asakir narrated that the Prophet :said

Surely there is a spring in Paradise sweeter than nectar, smoother than butter," cooler than ice, and smells better than musk. In

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Ibn ‘Asakir, Vol. ۲, p. ۴۴۲ al-Suyuti, Vol. ۶, p. ۵۸۹۰ -۱

In the same book, Ibn Hajar has also narrated from Umm Salamah that one night -۲ when the Prophet was in her house, his daughter Fatimah arrived, with Ali following her. Then the Prophet said: .O Ali! You and your companions are in Heaven. You and ..your Shi’a are in Heaven

that spring is the clay (tinah) from which we (my household and me) were created and our Shi’a are made from the same clay."(1)

There are yet other hadiths in which the Prophet, addressing Ali, used the expression " Shi’a of your descendants". This confirms what was suggested above, that the Shi’a are those who follow Ali because they believe in the institution of Imamate. As we will see in detail later, the Shi’a believe that Ali was the first Imam and after him the institution of Imamate continued in those offspring of Ali and Fatimah that were chosen by God and introduced by the Prophet.

For example, Zamakhshari (d. ۵۲۸ A.H.) in his Rabi’ al-Abrar reports that the Prophet said: "O Ali! When the Day of Resurrection comes I will hold on to God, you will hold on to me, your descendants will hold on to you and their Shi'a will hold on to them. Then you will see where we will be taken."(2)

It has to be noted that according to the Qur'an, prophethood was also inherited. The Qur'an says:

"And surely we have sent Noah and Abraham, and we put prophethood and the Book in their offspring". (۵۷:۲۶)

This means that those who were qualified to be chosen as prophets by God were included in their offspring.

In addition to the above-mentioned hadiths and their like, and those hadiths on Imamate that will be mentioned later, there are many other reasons that make the appearance of a group of people

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۱- Ibn ‘Asakir, Vol. ۱, p. ۱۲۹, No. ۱۸۰

۲- Cited in S ubhani, Vol, ۶, p. ۱۰۴.

such as the Shi'a in the lifetime of the Prophet a very natural and even necessary .phenomenon

For example, at the beginning of Islam when the Prophet was asked by God to start his public invitation to Islam by inviting his close relatives, he invited his relatives to a meal. After the meal the Prophet expressed his mission and invited the guests to Islam and said that whoever believed in Islam among them and assisted him would be his successor. All kept silent. The only one who accepted the invitation to assist him .was Ali, a teenager at that time

The Prophet asked him to sit and repeated his invitation for the second and the third time. Again and again it was just Ali who expressed his readiness to support the Prophet. The Prophet accepted Ali's submission to the will of God and carried out Allah's command to designate him as his successor. This event is documented in many (sources.(۱

In a very important statement, the Prophet clearly affirmed that Ali was truthful and free of false beliefs and wrong acts, be it in his personal conduct or in his speech and judgements, and implicitly asked Muslims to follow him. Umm Salamah reported that the Prophet said: "Ali is always with the truth (al-haqq) and the Qur'an and the truth are always with him, and until the Day of Resurrection they will never separate from ."each other

This particular hadith is narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Bakr, 'A'ishah, Abu Sa'id al-,Khuddari

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Among non-Shi'a sources , one c an refer to Tarikh a l-Uma m wa al- Muluk by -۱ Tabar i (d. ۳۱۰ A.H.), Vol. ۳, pp. ۶۲, ۶۳; Al-Kamil fi al- Tarik h by I bn al-Athir (d. ۶۳۰ A.H.), V ol. ۲, pp. ۴۰, ۴۱ Musna d by Ahmad b. Hanabal, Mus nad al-'Asharah al-Mubashshar in bi .al- Jannah, Sakhr serial no. ۸۴۱

Abu Layla, and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari as well.(۱) The Prophet is also quoted as saying, ("May God bless Ali. My Lord, make the truth always be with him".(۲)

The Prophet also asserted on several occasions that Ali was the most knowledgeable among his men in matters pertaining to Islamic sciences. For example, the Prophet said: "Wisdom is divided into ten parts: nine parts are given to Ali and one part is distributed among the rest of the people".(۳) Later the second Caliph reaffirmed the sayings of the Prophet by saying, "May God never afflict me with a difficult task where (Ali is not present".(۴

One also has to take into account the valuable and vital services and sacrifices of Ali, in order to be able to realise his position among Muslims. For example, when the infidels of Mecca planned to kill the Prophet and God informed him of their plot, the Prophet asked Ali whether he would be willing to sleep in his place so that the pagans would think that he is still at home, allowing him to safely leave Mecca. Ali accepted ,this task, on the occasion of which the verse was revealed

."And among people are those who sell their souls to acquire Divine pleasure"

The emigration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina marks the beginning of the Islamic Calendar. Ali served the cause of Islam by fighting in the Battles of Badr, Uhud, Khaybar, Khandaq and Hunayn, in which he played crucial roles. These are all registered in

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۱- According to Ghafari, p. ۱۰, this tradition has been tr ansm itted through ۱۵ non-S hi'a channels, s uc h as Musta dark by al-H akim al- Nishabur i, al-Sa wa'iq by ibn H .ajar, Ka nz al-'Ummal and Yanabi' al- Mawaddah

۲- .See, e.g. al-Tirm idhi, Kitab al-Manaq ib, Sakhr ser ial no. ۳۶۴۷

۳- .Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihaya h by I bn Kathir (d. ۷۷۴ A. H), Vol. ۷, p. ۳۵۹

۴- See for exam ple Al-Isa ba h fi Tamy iz al -Sa haba h by Ibn H ajar, V ol. ۲, p. ۵۰۹ and .Al-Bidaya h wa al-Nihaya h by I bn Kathir , Vol. ۷, p. ۳۶

.numerous historical works and collections of hadiths by non- Shi'a scholars

As was mentioned earlier, the Prophetic hadiths on the issue of the Imamate in general, and about Ali in particular, will be studied later. However, I would like to conclude the discussion here by referring to the well- known hadith of Ghadir Khumm. Returning from his last pilgrimage to Mecca, the Prophet asked thousands of Muslims .accompanying him to stop on the way

He stood on a platform or pulpit made for him out of saddles and said, "Whoever has adopted me as his master (mawla), Ali now is his master". Then the people present there, including the first and second Caliphs to be paid allegiance to Ali and .congratulated him. This hadith is transmitted by more than one hundred sources

For a comprehensive list of non- Shi'a sources of this hadith, see 'Abaqat al-Anwar by Mir Hamid Husayn al-Hindi (d. ۱۳۰۶ A.H.) and Al-Ghadir by 'Abd al-Husayn al-Amini (d. ۱۳۹۰ A.H.). Having affirmed the veracity of the hadith, some Sunni writers have .interpreted the term mawl, used in this hadith in another way

According to them, the term mawla here is used in the sense of friendship. Whether this can be accepted or not, there is no doubt that this tradition and the event gave Ali .a unique and central position among the Companions of the Prophet

Thus, it seems that the different sets of hadiths along with the historical evidence mentioned above leave no doubt that during the lifetime of the

Prophet many Muslims came to love Ali deeply and sought his company and were determined to follow him after the Prophet. These people were so frequently and significantly referred to as Shi'a of Ali that gradually the term "Shi'a" alone became .equivalent to the Shi'a of Ali

More important than this is the fact that the idea of the Imamate of Ali certainl y started in the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. The demise of the Prophet naturally brought the issue into focus and distinguished those who still believed in the necessity of following Ali from other Muslims, who sooner or later came to believe in the institution of the caliphate as the successorship to the Prophet in ruling the Islamic .society, and not as a Divine position

Describing events after the death of the prophet, Al-Mas'udi (d. ۳۴۵ A.H), a great Sunni historian, writes: "Surely Imam Ali and those of his Shi'a who were with him stayed in his house at the time that the allegiance to Abu Bakr was made."(۱)

Later certain events, such as the wars that occurred during the Caliphate of Ali and the event of Karbal, in which Husayn, the third imam of the Shi'a and ۷۲ people of his family and companions were killed, made the Shi'a of Ali more recognised and defined .Shi'a identity more sharply

For example, we find in one of the early works that Ali, condemning Talhah and Zubayr, said: "Surely the followers of Talhah and Zubayr in Basra killed my Shi'a

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.Ithba t al-Was iyah, p. ۱۲۱ -۱

and my agents".(1) Ab° Mikhnaf (d. ۱۵۸ A.H) reports that after the death of Mu'awiyah the Shi'a gathered at the house of Sulayman b. Surad and he told them: "Mu'awiyah has died and Husayn has refused to pay allegiance to the Umayyads and has departed towards Mecca and you are his Shi'a and the Shi'a of his father".(۲)

Early Shi'a

Naturally Shi'a Islam first started in the Hijaz amongst the companions of the Prophet. Reference to the Islamic historical and biographical works shows that the list of the Shi'a among the companions of the Prophet includes the following well-known bani Hashim (offspring of Hashim, great-grand father of the Prophet Muhammad): 'Abdullah b. al-'Abbas, al-Fadl b. al-Abbas, 'Ubaydillah b. al- 'Abbas, Qiththam b. al-'Abbas, 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-'Abbas, Tamam b. al-'Abbas, Aqil b. Abi Talib, Abu Sufyan b. al-Harth b. 'Abd al-Mutallib, Naufil b. al-Harth, 'Abdullah b. Ja'far b. Abi Talib, 'Awn b. Ja'far, Muhammad b. Ja'far, Rabi'at b. al-Harth b. 'Abd al-Mutallib, al-Tufayl b. al-Harth, al-Mughayrat b. Nawfil b. al-Harith, 'Abdullah b. al-Harth b. Nawfil, 'Abdullah b. Abi Sufyan b. al-Harth, al-'Abbas b. Rabi'at b. al-Harth, al-'Abbas b. 'Utbah b. Abi Lahab, 'Abd al-Mutallib b. Rabi'at b. al-Harth, Ja'far b. Abi Sufyan b. al-Harth.

The list of Shi'a among those companions of the Prophet who were not bani Hashim includes: Salman, Miqdad, Abu Dharr, 'Ammar b. Yasir, Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman, Khuzaymah b. Thabit, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Abu al- Haytham Malik b. al-Tihan, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Qays b. Sa'd b. 'Ubadah, 'Adiy b. Hatam,

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۱- Waq'at S effin by Nasr b. Muzahim (d. ۲۱۲ A.H).

۲- Maqtal al -Imam al -Husayn by Abu Mik hnaf, p. ۱۵.

Ubadah b. al-Samit, Bilal al- Habashi, Abu Rafi', Hashim b. 'Utbah, 'Uthman b. Hunayf,' Sahl b. Hunayf, Hakim b. Jibillah al-'Abdi, Khalid b. Sa'id b. al-'Aas, Ibn Husayb al-Aslami, Hind b. Abi Halah al-Tamimi, Ju'dah b. Hubayrah, Hujr b. 'Adiy al-Kindi, 'Amr b. al-Hamq al-Khuza'i, Jabir b. 'Abdullah al-Ansari, Muhammad b. Abi Bakr (the son of (the first Caliph), Aban b. Sa'id b. al-'Asi, Zayd b. Sauhan.(۱)

Chapter ۲: Sources of shi'i thought

point

Before studying Shi'a doctrines or practices, it is necessary to know the sources on which the Shi'a rely for understanding Islam. In what follows, we will study the four sources of Shi'i thought or in other words the four sources on which, from a Shi'i point of view any investigation about Islam has to be based: the Glorious Qur'an, the .Sunnah, the reason and the consensus

The Glorious Qur'an

point

Needless to say, the Qur'an is the most important source for all Muslims, including the Shi'a. The Qur'an also acts as an instrument of unity among all Muslims. Regardless of their different sectarian and cultural backgrounds, all Muslims refer to the same book as the Divine guide to govern their life. As in any other time, today throughout the Muslim world there exists only one Qur'an without any addition or alterations. A :typical Shi'a standpoint towards the Qur'an can be found in the following passage

We believe that the Qur'an was Divinely inspired, and revealed by Allah on the tongue of His honourable Prophet, making clear everything, an everlasting miracle. Man is unable to write anything like it

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For example, see Buhuth fi al-Milal wa al -Nihal by J. Subhani, V ol. ۶, pp. ۱۰۹ ۱۱۰. -۱ Sayyid Ali al-Madani (d. ۱۱۲۰ A.H.) in his Al- Darjat al-Rafi'a t fi Tabaqa t al-Shi'a al -

Imamiya h mentions names of ۶۹ Com panions of the Prophet who were Shi'a. Sayyid 'Abd al- Husayn Sharaf al-Din (۱۳۷۷ A.H.) in his Al-Fusul al-Muhimma h fi Ta'l if al-Umma h mentions names of more than two hundred Companions of the Prophet Muhamm ad who were Shi'a in an A-Z order star ting with Abu R afi' and ending with Yazid b. Hautharah al-Ansar i. Yous uf b. 'Abdullah (d. ۴۵۶) in his Al-Is ti'ab, Ibn al-Athir in his Us d al-Gha bah and Ibn H ajar (d. ۸۵۲ A.H.) in his Al-Isaba h are some of the non-Shi'a scholars who have mentioned some of the S hi'a pioneers.

because of its eloquence, clarity, truth and knowledge, and no alteration can be made to it. The Qur'an we have now is exactly what was sent to the Prophet, and anyone who claims otherwise is either an evil-doer, a mere sophist or else a person in error, :and all of them have gone astray, because it is the speech of Allah, and

(Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or from behind." (۴۱:۴۲"

We also believe that we must respect and give dignity to the Glorious Qur'an, and this both in word and in deed. Therefore, it must not be defiled intentionally, not even one of its letters, and it must not be touched by one who is not tahir [i.e. 'pure']. It is said in :the Qur'an

(None can touch it save the purified." (۵۶:۷۹) (۱"

Shi 'a deny any alteration in the Qur'an

As mentioned above, the Shi'a deny any alteration in the Qur'an and believe that the Qur'an available today is the same one that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an is complete. No one has ever seen a copy of the Qur'an different from the standard one in any part of the Islamic world. There are manuscripts of the Qur'an available today that go back to the time of Shi'a Imams and they are exactly the same .as the current ones

The Glorious Qur'an itself explicitly says that God Himself preserves the Qur'an from :any alteration and mutilation

Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its preserver. ((۱۵:۹)(۲

Regarding this

Muzaffar, p. ۲۶ -۱

It has to be noted that the c har ge with belief in alteration is limited to deletion of s -۲

ome alleged verses; otherwise neither Shi'ites nor Sunnites have ever been char ged with belief in addition to the Qur 'an. Therefore, one can argue from any verses of the .Qur 'and to refute the idea of alteration

verse, `Allamah Tabataba'i in his renowned Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, one of the :greatest commentaries of the Qur’an, states

the Qur’an is a living and eternal Reminder which will never die and fall into oblivion.... It is immune from any addition and loss. It is immune from and secure against any alterations in form and style which could affect its character and role, that is, as, "the Reminder of Allah which expresses divine truth and knowledge". For this reason, the aforesaid verse indicates that the Divine Book has always been and will continue to be .guarded against any mutilation and alteration

The Sunnah

After the Glorious Qur’an, the most important source for understanding Islam and therefore Shi’i thought is the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, including his sayings and his deeds. The Qur’an itself clearly gives such a high position to the Prophet, as he is referred to as the one who is responsible for explaining the Qur’an (۱۶:۴۴) and .(teaching the Qur’an and wisdom (۶۲:۲

The Prophet is a perfect example for the believers (۳۳:۲۱). He never speaks out of his own wishes (۵۳:۳). Muslims are asked to hold on to whatever he gives them and refrain .(from whatever he prohibits (۵۹:۷

Knowing the above verses and many other verses on the status of the Prophet and taking into account the significance of acting as a divine messenger chosen directly by God and spoken to by Him, the Shi’a, along with other Muslims, cultivated a state of sincere love for and devotion to the Prophet

.Muhammad

The household of the Prophet

point

There seems to be no disagreement among Muslims about the validity of following the teachings of the household of the Prophet in understanding Islam, especially according to the Sunni view which considers even all the companions of the Prophet as reliable sources of understanding Islam.(١) There is no doubt, then, that the household of the Prophet are reliable and trustworthy in presenting Islam.

This fact becomes even clearer when we refer to the traditions from the Prophet about his household, and examine sayings of Sunni scholars about the knowledge of Ali and members of the household of the Prophet. For example, Imam Malik says: "No eyes have seen, no ears have heard, and nothing has come to the heart of any human being better than Ja'far b. Muhammad in his knowledge, in his piety, in his asceticism and in his servitude to God." This is what Ibn Taymiyah reports from Imam Malik in his book. (٢)

In a survey about those people who narrated from Imam Sadiq, Shaykh al-Mufid (d.٤١٣) in his al-Irshad asserts that those who were trustworthy among them from different schools of thought were ٤٠٠٠ in number. Thus, there is no ambiguity here and this is why many Sunny scholars such as the late Shaykh Shaltut have clearly pointed out that every Muslim is allowed to act according to one of the five Islamic schools of fiqh: Ja'fari, Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi'i.

The reason is clear, because if Imam Ja'far Sadiq or other members of the household of the

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١- Sunni Muslims hold that whoever met the Prophet while believing in him is considered as a companion of the Prophet and can be relied on in acquir ing knowledge about Islam. Accordingly, members of the household of the Prophet such

as Imam Ali and Fatimah who have always been with the Prophet and had the closest .relation to the Prophet can unquestionably be relied on

.Al-Ta wassul wa al-Wasila h, p. ۵۲, firs t edition -۲

Prophet did not possess more knowledge or better access to the knowledge of the

Prophet than the rest, then one has to admit that he must have been at least equal to others, especially if he is to have taught them such as Abu Hanifah, the Imam of Hanafi Muslims who attended Imam Sadiq's lectures for two years. People who are educated or who are seeking the truth are expected, therefore, to examine all Islamic sources available, and thereby come to a conclusion about the ways Muslims can lead exemplary lives. Certainly one rich source is the teachings of the household of the .Prophet

Now, let us see whether it is necessary to refer to the household of the Prophet in understanding Islam or not. To provide an answer I will just focus on some traditions from the Prophet narrated by great Sunni narrationists and accepted by both Sunni and Shi'a scholars. But prior to that it has to be noted that all the teachings of the household of the Prophet were always based on the Glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah .of the Prophet

No one should think that for example Imam Sadiq was saying something according to his own opinion about Islam. Whatever they uttered was exactly what they had themselves received from the Prophet. There are many traditions in this regard. For example, in Usul al-Kafi we find that Imam Sadiq said that whatever he said was what .he had received through his forefathers from the Prophet

One of these traditions

is the famous tradition of Thaqalayn. This tradition was uttered by the Prophet on different occasions, including the day of ‘Arafah in his last pilgrimage and the ١٨t h of Dhu’l-Hijjah in Ghadir Khum. Despite minor differences in the wording the essence .remains the same in all versions of the tradition

:For example, in one version of the tradition the Prophet said

Oh people! I leave among you two precious things: the Book of God and my“ ”.household. As long as you hold on to them you will not go astray

:Or in another tradition the Prophet said

I leave among you two precious things, which if you hold on to you will not go astray“ after me: the Book of God which is like a rope extended between the heaven and the earth, and my household. These two things will not separate from each other until they reach me near the fountain on the Day of Judgement. Look and be careful how ”.you treat them after me

This shows that the Prophet was worried about the way that Muslims, or at least :some of them, would treat the Qur’an and his household. In another tradition he said

I leave two successors: first the Book of God which is like a rope extended between“ heaven and the earth and second my household. They will not separate from each ”.other until they come to me near the fountain of Kawthar

The above traditions can be found in major Sunni sources, such as: Sahih Muslim (Vol. ,٨, p. ٢٥

p: ٢٢

No. ۲۴۰۸), Musnad by Imam Ahmad (Vol. ۳, p.۳۸۸, No.۱۰۷۲۰), Sunan by Darimi (Vol. ۲, p. .(۴۳۲), and Sahih by Tirmidhi (Vol. ۵, p. ۶۴۳۲, No. ۳۷۸۸

They are also mentioned in books such as Usd al-Ghabah by Ibn Athir (Vol. ۲, p. ۱۳), Al-.(Sunan al-Kubra by Bayhaqi (Vol. ۲, p. ۱۹۸) and Kanz al-'Ummal (Vol. ۱, p. ۴۴

Now let us reflect on the content of the hadith, i.e. the fact that the Prophet has left among Muslims two weighty things: the Qur'an and his household and that as long as people hold on to them both, they will not go astray. This shows that these two things must always be in harmony with each other, and that they never contradict each other. Otherwise, the Prophet would not have given the instruction to follow both of .them

Moreover, the people would get puzzled about what to do if the household of the Prophet were to tell them to go in one direction and the Book of God says to go in another. Although this fact is implicitly understandable from the beginning of hadith, the Prophet himself later explicitly confirmed this fact by saying, "They will not ."separate from each other until they come to me near the fountain of Kawthar

:Thus, this hadith in all versions indicates that

- From the time of the Prophet until the end of the world the Book of God and the .household of the Prophet will always be together
- No one can say that the book

of God is enough, and that we do not need the household of the Prophet, or vice versa, for the Prophet clearly said: I leave two precious things that you must grasp .and if you do so you will not be misled

The household of the Prophet would never make mistakes and they are always • .truthful

It is also interesting that according to this hadith the household of the Prophet, like • the Qur'an itself, is held to be continuous, persisting until the Day of Judgement and Paradise. Thus, the household of the Prophet will never disappear, even for a short .period of time

The other hadith is the hadith of Safinah (ship). All Muslims have narrated that the :Prophet said

Be aware that surely the example of my household among you is like the example of" the ship of Noah. Whoever boarded the ship of Noah was saved and whoever refused ".to enter the ship of Noah was drowned

The hadith of Safinah in its different versions emphasises the same fact and can be found in different Sunni books. For example, it can be found in Mustadrak by Hakim Nishaburi, Vol. ۳, pp. ۱۴۹۱۵۱, Arba'in Hadith by Nabahani, al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah by Ibn .Hajar amongst other sources

Thus, according to these sets of traditions the appeal to the guidance of the .household of the Prophet is of the utmost necessity

Note: The tradition of thaqalayn is mentioned in both Sunni and Shi'a sources so it is a matter of agreement among all Muslims. However, there is

a version of the hadith in which the Prophet is quoted as saying 'my Sunnah' instead of 'my household'. Although this version can only be found in some Sunni sources, there is no difficulty in understanding what this tradition means, provided that this .version too can be authenticated

The Prophet in many traditions narrated by all Muslims has said: "I am leaving two precious things and those are the glorious Qur'an and my household" and in a few traditions narrated only by a particular group of Muslims has said: "the glorious Qur'an and my Sunnah." Obviously the result would be that as one side of the comparison is .the same, i.e. The Qur'an, the other side too must be identical

Therefore, 'my Sunnah' and 'my household' also must be identical; otherwise one has to say that there is no harmony in what the Prophet said. Thus, the very act of resorting to the teachings and advice of the household of the Prophet is the very act of resorting to the Sunnah of the Prophet. Thus, the only way to reach the Sunnah of the Prophet and to understand exactly what his Sunnah was, is to refer to these people who have had the closest relationship with him and who knew better than .anyone else what he said or did or approved

?Who constitute the house hold of the Prophet

The other question concerns the exact meaning of "the household". According to many traditions, we are told to refer to the household of the Prophet: "Ahlul Bayt" or "'Itrah". What

do these terms refer to? There is no doubt about the status of the household of the Prophet in Islam, but there may be a need to investigate the referent of the term to .see whether it includes anyone who was a relative of the Prophet or not

Of course, there is no doubt among Muslims that certainly Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, Imam Ali, and their sons: Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn are members of his household. The only concern is whether other relatives of the Prophet are .included or not, and if so, to what extent

Sunni Muslims believe that all relatives of the Prophet are included. Of course, they exclude those who did not embrace Islam, such as Abu Lahab, one of the uncles of the Prophet and at the same time one of his most hostile enemies who has been cursed in the Qur'an. Shi'a Muslims believe that the Ahlul Bayt are those who have appropriate levels of faith and knowledge that make it possible for them to be mentioned along with the Qur'an in the tradition of the Thaqalayn and others. Moreover, they believe .that the Prophet himself has clearly defined them

:In what follows, I will mention some hadiths narrated in major Sunni sources

:Muslim narrates from 'Ayishah, Umm al-Mu'minin (۱)

The Prophet went out wearing a black woollen cloak, when Hasan the son of Ali came to him, so the Prophet let Hasan come in with him under the cloak. Then Husayn came and he too

entered. Then Fatimah came. She entered as well. Then Ali came. He also went under the cloak, such that the cloak covered the Prophet, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn. :Then the Prophet recited

God only desires to keep away impurity from you, O People of the House! And to' (purify yo u a (thorough) purifying' (۳۳:۳۳) (۱

Muslim narrates from Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas that he was asked by Mu'awiyah why he (۲) :refused to verbally abuse Ali. Sa'd replied

I remember three sayings of the Prophet about Ali which caused me not to say" anything bad about him. If I possessed even one of these qualities it would be better (for me than red camels.(۲

The first was that when the Prophet wanted to go to the war of Tabuk, he left Ali in Medina. Ali was very sad at not having the good fortune to join the army and fight for the sake of God. He went to the Prophet, saying: 'Do you leave me with the children and women?' The Prophet replied: 'Are you not happy to be to me, as Aaron was to '?Moses, except that there will be no prophet after me

Second I heard from the Prophet on the day of conquest of Khaybar: 'Certainly I will give the flag [of Islam] to a man that loves God and His Messenger and is loved b y God and His Messenger'. We hoped to be given the flag, but the Prophet said: 'Call Ali for me!' Ali came

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Sahih by Muslim, Vol. ۴, p.۱۸۸۳, No.۲۴۲۴ (Kitab Fada'il al- Sahabah, Bab Fada'il Ahlul -۱ (Bayt, Sakhr ser ial no. ۴۴۵۰

.Red camels were cons idered very valuable in those days -۲

while suffering from pain in his eyes. The Prophet gave him the flag and at his hands .God granted us victory

Third when the verse of Mubahalah was revealed the Prophet called Ali, Fatimah, (Hasan and Husayn and said: ‘My Lord! These are my household’.”(١

Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal narrates from Anas b. Malik that when the verse of tathir (٣) (٣٣:٣٣) was revealed, for six months the Prophet used to call at the house of Ali and Fatimah every morning on his way to the mosque for the Dawn Prayer and say: (“Prayer, O People of the House!”(٢

There are also traditions about the meaning of Qurb, (near ones) which has been mentioned several times in the Qur’an. For example, according to the Qur’an, the Prophet did not ask any payment in return for his teachings from the people. He just .wanted the people to love his Qurb, for their own benefit

So who are the Qurb? Zamakhshari, a great Sunni scholar and exegete of the Qur’an, says that when this verse was revealed the Prophet was asked who are meant by this verse, and to whom all have to be respectful. The Prophet replied: “Ali, Fatimah and (their two sons”.(٣

The reason

The Shi’a believe that the reason is a reliable source of knowledge and in complete harmony with revelation. According to some hadiths, God has two proofs (hujjah), through which humans can understand His will: the internal one which is the reason (al-’aql) and the external one, which are the prophets. Sometimes

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Sahih by Muslim, Vol.۴, p.١٨٧١, no.٢۴٠٨. (Kitab Fada’il al- Sahabah, Sakhr serial No. -١ .(۴۴٢٠

Musna d by Im am Ahmad b. Hanbal, inter national serial no. ١٣٢٣١. See also Suna n -٢ .by al-T irm idhi, inter national serial no. ٣١٣٠

.Al-Kashs haf by Zam akhshari, Comm entary of the verse ۴٢:٢٣, Vol.۴, p. ٢٢٠ -٣

the reason is called, “the internal prophet” and the prophets are called “the external .”reason

There is an established rule among Shi’a jurists that whatever judgement is made by the reason is the same as that made by the religion (shar’) and vice versa. It is also unanimously accepted that one of the conditions of moral or legal responsibility is to have a sound reason. If someone is insane, he is not considered as responsible upon .what he acts

What is expected of the people in religion also varies according to their mental and rational capacity. Those who are very clever and intelligent are expected to be more .prepared, to be more pious and obedient than those who are lay or ignorant

According to the Qur’an, God requires all human beings to exercise their rational faculty and to ponder on His signs and communications in the universe. On many occasions disbelievers are condemned and criticized because of their failure to think .or to act according to rational requirements

For example, they are condemned because of their blind imitation of their ancestors, :and there are many verses with rhetorical questions, calling for people to think like

,(Do not they think?!” (۳۶:۶۸“

Do not they ponder on the Qur’an?!” (۴:۸۲; ۴۷:۲۴) and“

(In these, there are signs for those who are thoughtful” (۱۳:۴; ۱۶:۶۷; ۳۰:۲۸“

In general, the reason contributes to religious studies in three major areas: One is to understand the realities of the world, such as the existence of God, the truth of

religion and scientific facts. The second is to introduce principles of moral values and legal norms, such as the wrongness of oppression and the rightness of justice. The third is to set up standards and logical processes of reasoning and inference. All these .three roles of the reason are recognised and, indeed, urged by Islam

In contrast, the role of revelation or the Scriptures in religious studies can be summed :up as follows

- ;confirmation of the facts that are already known by the reason
- introducing new subject that are not known by the reason, such as details of ;resurrection and detailed accounts of moral and legal systems
- .Providing sanctions through the religious system of reward and punishment

At the end, I should mention that there is nothing irrational in Islam. Of course, one has to distinguish between certain and decisive rational judgements, and one's guessing or personal opinions. If there is a case in which it seems that the rational judgement is in conflict with certain religious positions, one has to verify that there must be a mistake in at least one side: either it was not a real judgement of the .reason or it was not a religious law

God never misleads people by telling them to do something through the prophets, and the opposite thing through our God-given reason. There have always been some judgements attributed to reason and taken as contradicting religious positions, that .after close consideration have proven to be contrary to decisive rational premises

Consensus

Traditionally one of the

sources of understanding Islam is considered to be consensus (ijm,'). According to Shi'a methodology of thought, the consensus of all people or a group of them, such as the scholars by itself is not sufficient as a proof (hujjah); As one person may make .mistake, two or three, or thousands or even all of them may do so

However, whenever there exists an agreement among all Muslims or Muslim scholars in a way whereby it unveils the Sunnah, it can serve as a proof, as an instrument to uncover the will of God. For example, when we find that every Muslim in the time of the Prophet said his prayer in a certain way we realize that the Prophet had instructed them to do so; otherwise there would be no factor to unify their action. It is not possible to imagine that they had all acted blindly and without instruction or that they .all made mistakes and the Prophet did not correct them

Thus, for the Shi'a consensus in itself is not a proof. It only works when it leads to the discovery of Sunnah. Accordingly, if Muslims today agree on a given subject, while a scholar has doubt about the Islamic judgement on that subject, he methodologically .cannot say that because everybody says so, I also say the same

There have been many cases in the history where all human beings believed in the .same way and later they found out that they were wrong, e.g. the earth being flat

It is only the Qur'an and the Sunnah that are unquestionably true and immune from .any error or mistake

This approach grants a type of dynamism to Shi'i thought, so that every generation of scholars and even any single scholar is able and indeed is required to refer directly to the Qur'an and Sunnah and conduct his own original ijtih,d, that is his investigation and independent judgement. Ijtih‰d has never been banned or closed in the Shi'a world. The Shi'a believe that the view of no jurist, however high his position, is immune from scientific questioning or challenge. Of course, as in any other discipline, every religious scholar needs to consult and examine carefully the works of his .predecessors

Chapter ۳: Doctrines

point

Throughout the history of Islam, Muslims in spite of their differences, have had great agreement, not only in many principles of Islam, but also in many of its practices. The Qur'an and the great personality of the Prophet on the one hand, and the sincere love and devotion of all Muslims towards them, have unified Muslims and made out of .them a real nation that has its own identity, heritage, aims, objectives and destiny

The hostility of the enemies of Islam, who have always been trying to uproot Islam as a whole, along with challenges of the age, have also helped to awaken and strengthen the sense of unity and brotherhood among Muslims. The Qur'anic and prophetic call for unity and brotherhood has always been echoed by great leading Islamic

.personalities of different schools of Islam

With respect to beliefs, all Muslims share the belief in God and His unity, in the prophets in general and the mission of the Prophet Muhammad in particular which is to deliver the final message of God for human beings, along with the Resurrection, and the just and equal treatment of everybody on the Day of Judgement. These are the most fundamental principles of Islam which are agreed upon by all Muslims. An outside view about the extent of the agreement between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims is :expressed in the following passage

Since the Iranian Revolution everyone knows that Shi'ites are Muslims, like the Sunnis respecting the central dogma of the oneness of God, the same sacred writing (the Koran), the same Prophet Mohammad, the same belief in the resurrection followed by the last Judgement and the same fundamental obligations, prayer, fasting, .(pilgrimage, almsgiving, and jihad (holy war

These common points are more important than the differences: there is no longer any theoretical objection to a Shi'ite performing his prayers with a Sunni, or vice versa although many difficulties have existed in the past and in practice still remain. ((Richard, p. ۵; with abbreviation

In what follows, we will proceed by outlining principles of religion or articles of faith. (Some of the characteristic beliefs of the Shi'a will be examined thereafter.(۱

Principles of religion

Unity of God (۱)

The Islamic faith is formulated by the declaration of two facts, i.e., that there is no god (i.e., no one worthy of worship) but God (Allah) and

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One of the m ain s ources of the following disc ussions on the princ iples and pr – ۱ actices of Islam is "An Introduc tion to Is lam" by Bashir Rahim. For an online version

.[of this article, see www.al-islam.org/begin/index.html [٩

that Muhammad is His messenger. (La Ilaha Illallah Muhammadur-Rasululla h). Muslims believe that Allah is one. He has no partner or children. He is the beginning and he is the end. He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. The qur’an says that he is closer to man than his jugular vein, but he cannot be seen by eyes or :encompassed by human intellect. In a supplication, Imam Ali says

Oh God, verily I ask Thee by Thy Name, in the name of Allah, the All-merciful, the All-" compassionate, O the Possessor of Majesty and Splendour, the Living, the Self- " .subsistent, the Eternal, there is no God other than Thee

Divine justice: Among Divine attributes the Shi’a put a great emphasis on His justice. Of course, all Muslims believe that God is just (adil), in that God never commits any injustice towards His servants, and He never oppresses any one. This fact is clearly :expressed by the Qur’an

(God is not in the least unjust to the servants. (۳:۱۸۲ ۸:۵۱ ۲۲:۱۰

(Your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants. (۴۱:۴۶

(I am not in the least unjust to the servants. (۵۰:۲۹

(Surely God does not do injustice to the weight of an atom. (۴:۴۰

Surely God does not do any injustice to men, but men are unjust to themselves. ((۱۰:۴۴)(۱)

In addition to the importance of Divine justice in itself, the other reason for the emphasis on this doctrine by the Shi’a, is that the Ash’arites, a group of Sunni theologians, believe that there is no

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.There are much more verses in the Qur‘an affirming Divine justice -۱

objective criteria for morally right or wrong acts. Good is what God acts or whatever is commanded by God. Therefore, whatever God acts or commands is good and just by .definition

They believe that if God had asked us to tell lies telling lies would have become good and if God were to send the pious people to hell that would be just. Of course, they believe that God never does such acts, not because they are wrong in themselves, but because in practice He has said that those acts are wrong. Ash'arites also believe that human beings do not have free-will and it is God who creates their acts without them .having any role therein. They are only receptacles of Divine acts

The Shi'a and some other Sunni theologians, such as the Mu'tazilites, believe that good and bad, or right and wrong are objective, and that there are rational criteria for moral judgements. In other words, they believe in intrinsic goodness and badness. They believe that in reality there is a difference between, say, justice and oppression and it is not arbitrary that God has commanded us to be just and not to oppress .anyone even our enemies

They also believe that human beings are free and responsible for their acts. Of course, the Mu'tazilites believe in tafwid, i.e. that God has handed over His authority over human voluntary acts to them and they have complete control over their acts. But the Shi'a believe that although determinism (jabr) is wrong

and against Divine justice, and that human beings are free, their freedom and power is limited, and God has an overall authority upon their acts. This fact is expressed in :the well-known formulation of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq

There is no compulsion (jabr), nor is there absolute delegation of power (tafwid), but" ".the real position is between the two extremes

Due to the ultimate importance of this subject for any value system, the Shi'a have always stressed on the issue of Divine justice and have frequently introduced it along with tawhid (Divine unity), prophethood, Imamate (Divine leadership) and Resurrection as one of the five Principles of the Faith (Usul al-Madhhab) in contrast to tawhid, prophethood and resurrection which count as the three Principles of the .Religion (Usul al-Din), which are shared by all Muslims

This emphasis on the issue of Divine justice has not just had its role in the theoretical aspect of Shi'ism. Indeed, the Shi'a see the issue of justice such as a fundamental aspect of Islam that they have always called for implementation of the principle of justice on a social scale as well. Shi'a movements that have taken place have always .been calling for justice

Prophethood (۲)

(God has created mankind wisely and purposefully (۵۱:۵۶

He has given man reason and free-will to find his way towards his perfection and happiness. He has also supplemented the human reason with Divine revelation. Through His wisdom and justice, He has not left any people or corner of the world without guidance; He has sent prophets to

(all nations to instruct and guide them. (۱۰:۴۷ and ۱۶:۳۶

The first prophet was Adam and the last was Muhammad, the Seal of prophets (۳۳:۴۰). The Qur'an mentions twenty- five of the prophets and states that there were many more (۴۰:۷۸). Through the indications of hadiths, Muslims believe that there have been .۱۲۴,۰۰۰ prophets

Amongst those mentioned in the Qur'an are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Ezekiel, David, Solomon, Jonah, Zachariah, John the Baptist, Jesus and Muhammad. Among them, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad had universal mission and brought new codes of law. They are called, ."Ulu al-'Azm" meaning those of great determination

Other than the Qur'an itself, the Qur'an speaks of four Heavenly books: the Book of Abraham (۸۷:۱۹); the Psalms of David (۴:۱۶۳ and ۱۷:۵۵); the Torah of Moses (۲:۸۷, ۳:۳ ۴, .(۶:۹۱ ۱۵۴) and the Gospel of Jesus (۵:۴۶

A Muslim must believe in all the Holy Books (۲:۴ ۲۸۵) and in all the prophets. (۴:۱۵۲). As we will see later, the Shi'a also believe that all the prophets were necessarily infallible .and sinless prior to and during their mission

The Shi'a, like other Muslims, have a great love for the Prophet Muhammad. They see in the Prophet Muhammad the perfect model of entire reliance on God, profound knowledge of God, ultimate devotion to God, sincere obedience to the Divine will, the .noblest character, and compassion and mercy for all mankind

It was not accidental that he was chosen by God

to deliver His final and most perfect message for humanity. To be able to receive Divine revelation and be addressed by heaven requires one to possess a very high calibre, and furthermore to be able to receive the most perfect revelation requires .indeed the highest calibre

The Personal character and behaviour of the Prophet contributed greatly to the progress of Islam. He was known to be an honest, trustworthy and pious person from childhood. During his prophethood, he always lived by his principles and values. In the times of ease as well as difficulty, security as well as fear, peace as well as war, .victory as well as defeat, he always manifested humility, justice and confidence

He was so humble that he never admired himself, he never felt superior to others and he never lived a life of luxury. Both when he was alone and powerless as well as when he ruled the Arab peninsula and Muslims were whole-heartedly following him and .taking every drop of his ablution water, he behaved the same

He lived very simply and always with the people, especially the poor. He had no palace or court or guard. When he was sitting with his companions no one could distinguish him from others by considering his seat or clothes. It was only his words and .spirituality that distinguished him from others

He was so just that never ignored the rights of anyone, even his enemies. He exemplified in his life the Qur'anic command, "O you who believe! Be

upright for God, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite (you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety". (۵:۸

Before battles, he always gave instructions to his soldiers not to harm women, children, old people and those who surrendered themselves, not to destroy farms and gardens, not to chase those who have escaped from the war front, and to be kind to their captives. Just before his death, he announced in the Mosque: "Whoever feels that I am in debt to him or I have not observed his rights, please come forward and ."claim his right

Muslims cried, they were reminded of all the services that the Prophet had made for them and the troubles that he had undergone just to guide them. They knew that he never gave any priority to his own needs and never preferred his rest and convenience to others. Therefore, they uttered their statements of deep gratitude .and respect to him

But one man stood up and said: "You owe me something. Before one of the battles you were arranging the soldiers in a row and your stick hit me. Now, I want retaliation." Without any question the Prophet told one of his close companions to go .to his home and bring the same stick and asked the man to retaliate and hit him back

But the man said your stick hit the skin of my stomach. Therefore, the Prophet lifted his shirt so that he

could hit the skin, when suddenly the man kissed the body of the prophet. Perhaps, .the whole reason for doing this was so that he could kiss him out of respect and love

Imamah: As mentioned earlier, the Shi'a believe in the institution of Imamah as a continuation of prophethood. In Arabic the term "Imam" literally means "leader". An Imam, in general terminology may be good or bad, and the extent of his leadership may be very broad such as leading a whole nation, or limited such as leading congregations in a mosque. However, in the Shi'i faith the Imam in its narrower sense, .is the person who is in charge of all political and religious affairs of the Islamic nation

More exactly, the Imam is the person who is appointed by God and introduced by the Prophet and then by each preceding Imam by explicit designation (na••) to lead the Muslim community, interpret and protect the religion and the law (shari 'ah), and guide the community in all affairs. The Imam is the Representative of God on earth (khali fat- Allah) and the successor of the Prophet. He must be sinless and possess .divine knowledge of both the exoteric and the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an

The Sunni View: Sunni Muslims use the term Imam as an equivalent to the term "Caliph" (khali fah). In Arabic the term "khalifah" means successor. The term has been used as a title for whoever took the power and ruled the Islamic state after the

.demise of the Prophet Muhammad

A Caliph may be elected, or nominated by his predecessor, or selected by a committee, or may even acquire power through military force. A Caliph need not be sinless. Neither does he need to be superior to others in qualities, such as faith or .knowledge

The Twelver Shi'a who constitute the high majority of Shi'a Muslims believe that the :Prophet was succeeded by twelve Imams.(١) These are

١. Imam Ali b. Abu Talib(٢) Martyred ۴۰/۶۵۹

٢. Imam Hasan b. Ali Martyred ۵۰/۶۶۹

٣. Imam Husayn b. Ali Martyred ۶۱/۶۸۰

۴. Imam Ali b. Husayn Martyred ۹۵/۷۱۲

۵. Imam Muhammad b. Ali Martyred ۱۱۴/۷۳۲.

۶. Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad Martyred ۱۴۸/۷۶۵

٧. Imam Musa b. Ja'far Martyred ۱۸۳/۷۹۹

٨. Imam Ali b. Musa Martyred ۲۰۳/۸۱۷

٩. Imam Muhammad b. Ali Martyred ۲۲۰/۸۳۵

١٠. Imam Ali b. Muhammad Martyred ۲۵۴/۸۶۸

١١. Imam Hasan b. Ali Martyred ۲۶۰/۸۷۲

١٢. Imam al-Mahdi Born ۲۵۵/۸۶۸

The belief in a saviour is shared by most (if not all) religions. In Islam, the idea of a saviour is very deliberately presented in the doctrine of al-Mahdi (the Guided) who will uprise with Divine blessing and fill the earth with justice after having been filled with injustice and oppression. The idea of a saviour or a good end for the world is indicated

:in many Qur'anic verses and Islamic hadiths. For example, we read in the Qur'an

We have written in the Psalms following the Reminder: "My honourable servants shall (inherit the earth". (۲۱:۱۰۵

Yet we wanted to endow those who were considered inferior on earth, and make them

p: ۴۱

There is a series of hadiths, in which the prophet mentioned that there would be -۱ twelve leaders after him. For example, Bukhari Reports that the Prophet said: "There will be twelve leaders (amir) after me." Then the narrator says that the Prophet said something that he could not hear. He asked his father, who too was present at the time, to tell him what the Prophet had said. His father said that the Prophet had said: "All these twelve leaders will be from the tribe of Quraysh." Muslim also reports this tradition, saying that the narrator of this tradition went with his father to the place where the Prophet was, and the Prophet said: "This religion will not end until there will have been twelve successors (khalifah)". Then the narrator says: "The Prophet said something I did not understand and I asked my father. He said, the Prophet said: ".'They are all from Quraysh

As we saw earlier, Imam Ali was the Prophet`s cousin and son-in- law (the husband -۲ .of the Lady Fatimah). He was the first man who embraced Islam

(into leaders and make them [Our] heirs. (۲۸:۵

The following are only some examples of hadiths on the same idea of the saviour :narrated in both Sunni and Shi’a sources

:The Prophet said .۱

Even if the entire duration of the world's existence has already been exhausted and only one day is left(before the day of judgment), God will expand that day to such a length of time, as to accommodate the kingdom of a person from my household who (will be called by my name.(۱

:The Prophet also said .۲

Al-Mahdi is one of us, the members of the household (Ahlul-Bayt). God will prepare for (him (his affairs) in one night.(۲

:Furthermore, the Prophet said .۳

(Al-Mahdi will be of my family, of the descendants of Fatimah.(۳

It is also narrated from Jabir b. Abdillah al-Ansari that he heard the Messenger of .۴ :God saying

A group of my nation will fight for the truth until near the Day of Judgment when Jesus son of Mary, will descend, and their leader will ask him to lead the prayer, but Jesus will decline, saying: "No, Verily, among you God has made leaders for others in order (to honour this nation.(۴

Thus, al-Mahdi will have a universal mission starting from the Arab world. His name will be the same as the name of the Prophet Muhammad and he will be from the progeny of the Lady Fatimah. The Shi’a believe that he is the son of Imam Hasan al-’Askari. He was born in ۲۵۵ (A.H). In the year ۲۶۰ (A.H.) his

۱- Sunan by al-Tirm idhi, Kitab al-Fitan, Sakhr serial no. ۲۱۵۶ ۲۱۵۷ and Sunan by Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Mahdi, Sakhr serial no. ۳۷۳۳ ۳۷۳۴. According to Abu Dawud, the hadith had the ending, "He will fill out the earth with justice as it will have been full of injustice and oppression. See also Musnad by Ahmad, Musnad al-'Asharah al-Mubashs harinbi al-Jannah, Sakhr serial no. ۷۳۴ and Suna n by Ibn Maj ah, Kitab al- Jihad serial no. ۲۷۶۹.

۲- Sunan by ibn Majah, Kitab al-Fitan, Sakhr serial no. ۴۰۷۵ and Musnad by Ahmad, Musnad al-'Asharah al-Mubashshar in bi al- Jannah, Sakhr serial no. ۶۱۰.

۳- Sunan by Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Mahdi, Sakhr serial no. ۳۷۳۵. See also Sunan by Ibn Majah, Kitab al-Fitan, Sakhr serial no. ۴۰۷۶.

۴- Sahih by Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, Sakhr serial no. ۲۲۵ and Musnad by Ahmad, Baqi Musnad al-Mukthirin, Sakhr serial no. ۱۴۱۹۳ ۱۴۵۹۵.

.occultation started

He is still alive, but protected by God in the state of occultation till the preparations will be made for his reappearance. The same is believed by some Sunni scholars, but some other Sunni scholars believe that he has not yet been born. Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin in his A'yan al-Shi'ah has named thirteen examples of those Sunni scholars who have asserted that al-Mahdi is the son of Imam Hasan and already born, such as Muhammad b. Yousuf al-Kanji al- Shafi'i in his Al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib al-Zaman and Kifayat al-Talib fi Manaqib Ali b. Abi Talib; Nur al-Din Ali b. Muhammad al-Maliki in his Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah fi Ma'rifat al-A'immah and Ibn al-Jawzi in his well-known .Tadhkirat al-Khawass

Resurrection (۳)

The world will come to an end on the Day of the Resurrection (Qiyamah), the Day of Judgement. All men will be resurrected and presented before God Who will decide their individual fates according to their beliefs and deeds in this world. There will be rewards for the good, and punishments for the bad. (۲۲:۶-۹ ۱-۲; ۳:۱۸۵; ۶:۶۲). God will treat people with justice but the dominant factor in the administration of His Justice .(will be His Mercy (۶:۱۲

:Note

Although all Muslims believe in the above principles of Islam, there is a slight difference in their articulation of beliefs and practices. Shi'a Muslims articulate the above beliefs as principles or roots of the religion (Usul al-Din) and the acts of worship .(to follow as practices or branches of the religion (Furu al-Din

The reason for such an articulation is that those beliefs are the most fundamental .aspect of the religion and the criteria for being considered a Muslim

However, the mandatory acts of worship are implications of being faithful, since genuine faith manifests itself in practices. Sunni Muslims usually present the declaration of Islam (kalimah) consisting of bearing witness that there is no god but God (Allah) and that Muhammad is His Messenger together with four acts of worship, i.e. the daily prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca and almsgiving as the Five Pillars of .Faith

They consider other acts of worship such as enjoining the good and prohibiting the .bad, and struggle as obligatory acts, but not included amongst the Pillars of Faith

Chapter ۴: Practices

point

:The main mandatory acts of worship accepted by both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims are

The Daily Prayers

Every Muslim from the time he or she attains puberty performs five daily prayers (salah). To be able to start the prayer one must first perform the ritual ablution (wudu) in the prescribed form. Then one stands facing Mecca and makes an intention to .perform the specific prayer of the time in order to attain proximity to God

This intention must be kept all the time during the prayer. If someone at the beginning or later on forgets what he is doing, or prays in order to show off, or for any other selfish motive, his prayer becomes void. The actual prayer starts when the person utters: Allah-u Akbar (God is the Greatest). With this

he enters the formal state of prayer in which he remains until the completion of his .prayers

:Each prayer consists of two to four units (rak'ah).(۱) Each unit consists of

i. The recitation of the opening chapter of the Qur'an followed by another chapter (such as Tawhid or Qadr;(۲

;ii. bowing down (ruku) and praising and glorifying God in that position

.iii. Performing two prostrations (sajdah) and then praising and glorifying God

The prayers are ended by bearing witness that God is One and has no partners and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger with salutations upon him and his household (tashahhud) and offering peace to the Prophet, all the righteous people .(and all who are engaged in prayers (taslim

The daily prayer is the most important form of worship and remembrance of the Lord. :The Qur'an says

Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the (remembrance of God is the greatest, and God knows what you do. (۲۹:۴۵

Fasting .۲

The second act of worship is fasting (sawm) in the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. In this month every mature Muslim refrains from eating, drinking and sexual activity from dawn to sunset.(۳) Like any other acts of worship, fasting must be performed with pure intention, that is, to be performed solely for the sake of God and to attain proximity to Him. Along with closeness to God and achieving His pleasure, there are many other benefits for fasting, such as strengthening one's determination, reminding people of God's blessings such

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The morning prayer (fajr) which is performed between dawn and sunrise consists -۱

of two units, the noon (Zuhr) and afternoon prayers (‘asr) consist of four units, the sunset prayer (maghrib) consists of three units and the evening (‘is ha’) consists of .four units

In three unit and four unit pr ayers the third and four th units cons ist of rec itation -٢ of the opening chapter of the Qur‘an or alter natively rec itation of a spec ific rememb brance (dhikr) called, “al - tasbihat al-arbi’ah” (Four Glorifications) and then bowing down and prostrations. In these prayers the affirmation of the oneness of God and the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad and salutations upon him and his .household are performed in both the second unit and the last units after prostrations

.Several groups of people are exempted, such as the sick or those who travel -٣

as the food that they enjoy everyday which they may take for granted, remembering the hunger and thirst of the Day of Judgement, helping the rich to understand what the poor experience in order to awaken their sense of benevolence and sympathy, weakening one's appetites and lower desires, and letting rational understanding and :spiritual awareness flourish. In general the Qur'an says

O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before (you, so that you may guard (against evil). (۲:۱۸۳

Pilgrimage to Mecca .۳

Every Muslim who has attained puberty, and is financiall y and physically capable, must once in his lifetime perform pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) in the month of Dhu'l-Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. In Mecca is situated the most important Mosque for the Muslims all over the world called Masjid al-Haram, which is .the sanctuary of the Ka'bah

All Muslims direct their face and body towards the Ka'bah in their prayers. The Ka'bah is the cubical construction built by the Prophet Abraham and his son, Prophet Ishmael, on the foundations of what had originally been built by the Prophet Adam. Indeed, to a great extent, pilgrimage to Mecca is a symbolic

Reconstruction of what the Prophet Abraham, the arch monotheist went through in this very place about four thousand years ago. After a long journey, when Abraham arrived in Mecca he was asked by God to make preparation for people's pilgrimage to :Mecca. The Qur'an says

Do not associate with Me anything, and purify My house

for those who circle around it and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves. And proclaim among the people the pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel from every remote path that they may witness the benefits for them and mention the name of God during the appointed days over what He has (given them. (۲۲:۲۶-۲۸

Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bekka, blessed and a guidance for the nations. In it are the clear signs, the standing place of Abraham, and whoever enters it shall be secure, and pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of God, (upon) everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it; and whoever disbelieves, then surely God is Self- sufficient, above any need of the (worlds. (۳:۹۶ ۹۷

Pilgrimage to Mecca is full of unforgettable experiences. Perhaps among them, the most outstanding are selflessness, brotherhood, equality and simplicity. Every year millions of Muslims from different continents leave their home, family, business and whatever is dear to them, and set out on their journey towards Mecca, located in a .desert

Everyone is asked to be present there in the same places at the same time all wearing the same clothes and performing the same rites. The rich and the poor, the king and the ordinary man, the elite and the layman should all stand shoulder to shoulder and wear two pieces of white cloth. This is something that

every one should experience

.At least once in his lifetime, and then try to implement it in his day to day life

Almsgiving .۴

Giving charity is highly recommended in the Qur'an and Sunnah and the reward for charitable acts are great. Although everything including one's financial possessions :belongs to God, the Qur'an presents giving charity as giving a loan to God

Who is the one that lends to God a good lending so that God may give him double? ((۵۷:۱۱

In addition to voluntary charities, there are certain types of charity that are obligatory. For example, one type of almsgiving is zakat, a wealth tax of a small percentage (usually ۲.۵٪). Paying zakat is not a gift for the poor but rather is a right for :them that must be observed

(And in their properties is the right of the beggar and the destitute. (۵۱:۱۹

:Imam Ali also said

God the Glorified has fixed the livelihood of the destitute in the wealth of the rich. Consequently, whenever the destitute remains hungry, it is because some rich (persons have denied him his share.(۱

Those whose possessions of certain amounts of wheat, barley, dates, raisins, gold, silver, camels, cows and sheep surpass certain quantities must pay zakat on a yearly basis to the less fortunate amongst one's relatives, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarers and etc. Zakat may be spent for food, shelter, education, health care, .orphanages and other public services

It is noteworthy that in many verses, paying zakat is mentioned next to saying one's prayers (Allah) and as a sign

(Nahjal–Balaghah (The Peak of Eloquence –۱

of faith and belief in God. Paying zakat is an act of worship, so it must be performed .for the sake of God

Therefore, not only does it help the needy and contribute to the establishment of social justice and development, but it also purifies the soul of those who pay from :miserliness and greed. The Qur'an says

(Take alms from their wealth in order to purify and sanctify them. (٩:١٠٣

Khums: Shi'a Muslims also believe in another obligator y tax, called khums. In Arabic Khums literally means one fifth. It is a ٢٠٪ tax on the excess profit that a person annually makes. At the end of one's financial year, one pays ٢٠٪ of all one's earnings after deduction of house- hold and commercial expenses. (١)The obligation to pay

:Khums has been mentioned in the Qur'an

And know that whatever profit you may attain, one fifth of it is assigned to God and the Messenger, and to the near relatives [of the Messenger] and the orphans, the destitute, and the wayfarer, if you have believed in God and that which We sent down (to our servant [Muhammad]. (٨:۴١

Sunni Muslims usually believe that the verse only refers to what Muslims earn when .they win a war (booty) and consider it to be a type of zakat

According to Shi'i jurisprudence, half of the khums belongs to the twelfth Imam, the remaining member of the household of the Prophet and his successor, and the other

Half to the poor descendants of the Prophet, called "sayyids". Khums must

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١ - There are other cases mentioned in Shi'a jurisprudence in which paying khums .becomes obligatory. What has been mentioned above is the most popular one

be spent under the supervision of a Shi'a religious authority (marji' al-taqlid), i.e. the .grand jurist (ayatullah) that one follows in practical issues

This is to make sure that it is spent in the way that the Imam Mahdi is pleased with. The portion belonging to the Imam is usually spent on Islamic seminaries and other .educational projects such as publishing useful books or building Mosques and schools

Struggle for the sake of God .۵

Every Muslim has to struggle hard and strive for the sake of God in different ways to make improvements to human life in general and his individual life in particular. The :Qur'an says

(He has created you upon the Earth and has asked you to develop it. (۱۱:۶۱

To be indifferent to human catastrophes or to be lazy in one's personal life is greatly condemned. On the other hand the one who works hard to earn some money to spend on his family and improve their living conditions is considered as a hero in the .struggle for the sake of God, a muj,hid

A very outstanding and vital case of this struggle (jihad) is to defend human rights such as liberty, freedom, and Islamic and human values such as justice, dignity, and a :Muslim nation's integrity. The Qur'an says

Permission [to fight] is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully and offensively waged, and surely God is able to give them victory. Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly, only because they said, "Our Lord is God." (۲۲:۳۹-
(۴۰

And why do you not

fight for the sake of God and the utterly oppressed men, women, and children Who are crying out, “O Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors, and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will (help.” (۴:۷۵

Of course, jihad also includes more personal cases in which one’s family, property or reputation is endangered, usurped or damaged. According to Islamic hadiths, the one who is killed while defending his family or land is considered the same as the soldier .who is martyred in the warfront

:Jihad must continue until the just cause is achieved. The Qur’an says

(Fight against aggressors until oppression is stopped.” (۲:۱۹۳“

Of course, on a larger scale, a real jihad has always existed from the dawn of creation of mankind, between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and between the party of .God and the party of Satan

This battle will more or less continue till the End of the Time when the Earth will be .filled with justice and fair distribution of all resources in the Government of al-MahdÓ

Jihad whether it be with the pen, the tongue, a weapon or any other means is an act of worship, and must be performed with pure intention, that is, only for the sake of God and for just causes. No one is allowed to fight or struggle for materialistic purposes, for personal glory or the glory of any tribe, race, nation or any other oppressive cause

.such as occupying others' land to become richer or more powerful

Indeed, jihad first of all starts within the self of a mujhid (one who struggles). To make sure that one can win the external battle against evil, one has to fight first against his own lower desires and lusts, and must first liberate his own heart from any satanic occupation and regain the dignity and honour that God the Almighty has given human :beings. The Qur'an says

O the soul at peace, return to your Lord, well- pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). (So enter among My true servants and enter into My Paradise! (۸۹:۲۷-۳۰

According to a well-known hadith, once the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said to a group of his companions who had won a battle: "Well- done. Welcome to the people who have completed the minor jihad (al- jihad al-asghar) and ".on whom the major jihad (al- jihad al-akbar) is still incumbent

Astonished, the companions who had defeated the enemies and were prepared to give the dearest thing to them, i.e. their life to defend Islam asked, "What is the major jihad?" The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) replied: "The ."[major jihad is to fight against your own selves [or your souls

Thus, to resist against one's temptations, and prohibit one's soul from wrong, and to .purify one's self is the greatest and the most difficult jihad

At the end, let us refer to some of the merits of those who

:struggle for the sake of God as explained by God Himself

Those who believe, and have left their homes and strive hard with their wealth and their lives in God's way, are much higher in rank with God. These are they who are triumphant. Their Lord gives them good tidings of mercy from Him, and acceptance, and Gardens where enduring pleasures will be theirs. There they will abide forever. (Surely with God there is a Mighty reward. (۹:۲۰-۲۲

Enjoining the good and prohibiting the bad .۶

Enjoining the good (al-amr bi al-ma'r°f) and prohibiting the bad (al-nahy 'an al-munkar) are two acts of worship

That every mature Muslim has to perform whenever applicable. No Muslim can be indifferent to what happens in the world around him. Part of the social responsibilities of each individual Muslim is to observe human and religious values, and whenever any of them is deliberately overlooked or violated, he must advise and direct those responsible towards performing the good and against committing the bad and sinful (acts. (۳:۱۰۳, ۱۰۹, ۱۱۳;۷:۱۹۹; ۹:۷۱, ۱۱۲; ۲۲:۴۱

Chapter ۵ : The shi'a in the world

According to UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund) and other sources, in the year ۱۹۹۹ the world population exceeded six billion.(۱) Around twenty percent of this population (that is around ۱.۲ billion) adhere to Islam. A breakdown of the Muslim (population of the world in (Mid) ۱۹۹۸ is estimated as follows:(۲

Africa: ۳۱۵,۰۰۰,۰۰۰

Asia: ۸۱۲,۰۰۰,۰۰۰

Europe: ۳۱,۴۰۱,۰۰۰

Latin America: ۱,۶۲۴,۰۰۰

Northern America: ۴,۳۴۹,۰۰۰

.Oceania: ۲۴۸,۰۰۰

Muslims live all over the world. The total number of countries with Muslim inhabitants is ۲۰۸.(۳) About ۸۵٪ of the Muslims live outside the Arab

p: ۵۳

۱- The world population on ۰۱/۰۱/۲۰۰۲ is estimated to have been ۶,۱۹۶,۱۴۱,۲۹۴. (See U.S. Census Bureau official website at: www. census. gov

۲ - ۲ Britannica ۲۰۰۲, Deluxe version. According to this source, the overall Muslim population of the world Mid ۱۹۹۸ was ۱,۱۶۴,۶۲۲,۰۰۰, that is ۱۹.۶ percent of the world .population

۳- .Britannica, ۲۰۰۲, Deluxe version

world.(۱) The majority of Muslims live to the east of the borders of Iran, especially in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia. Indonesia is the most populated .Muslim country

Among Muslims who constitute the minority of the world population, the Shi'a constitute about ۱۰٪ of the Muslims, which according to the current population of the world would amount to ۱۲۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰. (۲)

:For example, Britannica ۲۰۰۲ (Deluxe Edition) reads

Over the centuries the Shi'ite movement has deeply influenced all Sunnite Islam, and" its adherents numbered about ۶۰ to ۸۰ million in the late ۲۰th century, or one-tenth of all Islam. Shi'ism (Arabic: Shi'ah, or Shi'i Islam) is the majority faith in Iran, Iraq, and perhaps Yemen (San'a') and has adherents in Syria, Lebanon, East Africa, India, and ".Pakistan

According to some sources, the figure is ۱۱٪.(۳) Thus, the present Shi'a populatio of the world must be around ۱۳۲,۰۰۰,۰۰۰.(۴) A breakdown of the Shi'a population in some Asian countries with a Shi'a majority or with a considerable percentage of Shi'a population can be summed up as follows:(۵) (۶)

Afghanistan: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۲۴,۷۹۲,۰۰۰./ Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۰): Sunni Muslim ۸۴٪; Shi'i Muslim ۱۵٪; other ۱٪.(۷)

Azerbaijan: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۷,۶۵۰,۰۰۰./Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۱): Shi'i Muslim ۷۰٪; Sunni .Muslim ۳۰٪

Bahrain: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۶۳۳,۰۰۰. / Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۱): Muslim ۸۱.۸٪, of which Shi'i ۶۱.۳٪, Sunni ۲۰.۵٪; Christian ۸.۵٪; other ۹.۷٪.(۸)

India: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۹۸۴,۰۰۴,۰۰۰. / Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Hindu ۸۱.۳٪; Muslim ۱۲.۰٪, of which Sunni ۹.۰٪, Shi'i ۳.۰٪; Christian ۲.۳٪, of which Protestant ۱.۱٪, Roman Catholic ۱.۰٪; Sikh ۱.۹٪; Buddhist ۰.۸٪; Jain

.For example see Islam Outside the Arab World by D. Wester land and I. Svanberg -١
The rest are mostly Sunni Muslims consisting of Hanafis (can be found in Egypt, -٢ Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey), Malikis (dominant in Morocco and Sudan), Shafi'is (The Shafi'i school is applied in Syria, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait, and c o-exists with other schools in Jordan and Egypt) and Hanbalis. According to MEDEA, the entry "SUNNISM", the Hanbali school is the official .school in Saudi Arabia and Qatar
Yann Richard (١٩٩١, English translation ١٩٩٥), p.٢ using mainly figuresmput forward -٣ Md-R. Djalili, Rligionet revolution, Paris, Economica, ١٩٨١, p.٢٣ff, and M. Momen, An Intoduction to Shi'i Islam, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, ١٩٨٥, pp.٢۶۴ff. Thus, Richard's figures relate to no later than ٨٠'s. His break Down is as follows: Iraq: ۵۵ percent or ١٨,٠٠٠,٠٠٠; Bahrain: ٧٠ percent or about ١٧٠,٠٠٠; Kuwait: ٢۴ percent of the Kuwaiti citizens or ١٣٧,٠٠٠; Qatar: ٢٠ percent of the population or ۵٠,٠٠٠; United Arab Emirates: ۶ percent or ۶٠,٠٠٠; Saudi Arabia: ٧ percent of Saudi citizens or ۴۴٠,٠٠٠; Lebanon: One third or one m illion; India: ١۵ to ٢٠ percent of Mus lim population whic h reaches ٨٠ million or ١٢ percent of the total population (Imam is and Ismailis) ; Pakistan: ١٢,٠٠٠,٠٠٠; Afghanistan: ١۵ percent or about ٢.۵ million; Azerbijan: a large Shi'a community (۴.۵ million); Turkey: ١,۵٠٠,٠٠٠ apart from 'Alavites; Syria: ۵٠,٠٠٠ apart .(from 'Alavites. (Note: Shi'a and 'Alavites together reach ۴,٩٠٠,٠٠٠
Unfortunately, there are no accurate statistics reflecting the exact number of ١ -۴ Muslims in general and Shi'a in particular. What suggested above is according to most of the sources available on the subject. However, it has been suggested that the Shi'a comprises ٢٣٪ of the Muslims, while the Hanafis compr ise ٣١٪; the Malikis comprise ٢۵٪; the Shafi'is comprise ١۶٪ and the Hanbalis comprise ۴٪ of the Muslims. See S. M. Qazwini, p. ۴, taken from the Bulletin of Affiliation: Al-Madhhab ñ Schools of Thought, vol. ١٧, no. ۴ (December ١٩٩٨), p. ۵
The figures mentioned in the text is according to Britannica ٢٠٠٢, Deluxe Edition. -۵ Figures relate to the year ١٩٩٨. Therefore, the populations must have increased in the .last few years. However, the percentages would have remained the same
It has to be noted that the list above is not meant to be inclusive; it is a selection -۶ based on the collected information from the source on each country. For example, .Qatar is missing, while according to MEDEA, ١٠٪ of the population these are Shi'a

CIA World Factbook estimates the population of Afghanistan in July ٢٠٠١ as follows: -٧ ٢٦,٨١٣,٠٥٧/Sunni Muslim ٨٤٪, Shi'a Muslim ١٥٪, other ١٪. Below I will refer to this source by CWF. According to Westerlund and Svanberg (١٩٩٩, p. ١٧٧), about ١٨٪ of the population of Afghanistan are considered to be adherents of Twelver Shiism and .somewhat less than ٢٪ Ismailis

According to CWF, Shi’a of Bahrain constitute ٧٠٪ of the Muslim population. - ٨ According to MEDEA (European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation), ٨٥٪ of the population are Muslims of which ١/٣ are Sunni and ٢/٣ are Shi’a (in majority Arabs but also ٧٠.٠٠٠ Iranians). According to Fuller and Francke (١٩٩٩, .p. ١٢٠), the Shi’a form approximately ٧٠ percent of the native population of Bahrain

.Zoroastrian ۰.۰۱٪; other ۱.۳٪ ;۰.۴٪

Iran: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۶۱,۵۳۱,۰۰۰ / Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Muslim ۹۹.۰٪; (Shi'i ۹۳.۴٪, (Sunni ۵.۶٪); Christian ۰.۳٪; Zoroastrian ۰.۰۵٪; Jewish ۰.۰۵٪. (۱

Iraq: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۲۱,۷۲۲,۰۰۰./ Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۴): Shi'I Muslim ۶۲.۵٪; Sunni Muslim ۳۴.۵٪; Christian (primarily Chaldeanrite and Syrianrite Roman Catholic and (Nestorian) ۲.۷٪; other (primarily Yazidi syncretist) ۰.۳٪.(۲

Jordan: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۴,۶۸۲,۰۰۰. /Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Sunni Muslim ۹۶.۵٪; (Christian ۳.۵٪. (۳

Kuwait: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۱,۸۶۶,۰۰۰. / Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Muslim ۸۵٪, of which .Sunni ۴۵٪, Shi'a ۳۰٪; other Muslim ۱۰٪; other (mostly Christian and Hindu) ۱۵.۰٪

Lebanon: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۳,۵۰۶,۰۰۰. / Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Muslim. ۵۵.۳٪, of which Shi'i ۳۴.۰٪, Sunni ۲۱.۳٪; Christian ۳۷.۶٪, of which Catholic ۲۵.۱٪ (Maronite ۱۹.۰٪, Greek Catholic or Malachite ۴.۶٪), Orthodox ۱۱.۷٪ (Greek Orthodox ۶.۰٪, Armenian Apostolic (۵.۲٪), Protestant ۰.۵٪; Druze ۷.۱٪. (۴

Oman: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۲,۳۶۴,۰۰۰ /Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۳): Muslim ۸۷.۷٪, of which Ibadiyah Muslim c.۷۵٪ (principal minorities are Sunni Muslim and Shi'i Muslim); Hindu (۷.۴٪; Christian ۳.۹٪; Buddhist ۰.۵٪; other ۰.۵٪. (۵

Pakistan: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۱۴۱,۹۰۰,۰۰۰./Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۳): Muslim ۹۵.۰٪ (mostly Sunni, with Shi'i comprising about ۲۰٪ of total population); Christian ۲.۰٪; Hindu ۱.۸٪; (others (including Ahmadiyah) ۱.۲٪.(۶

Saudi Arabia: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۲۰,۷۸۶,۰۰۰./Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۲): Sunni Muslims (۹۳.۳٪, Shi'i Muslims ۳.۳٪.(۷

Syria: Population (۱۹۹۸): ۱۵,۳۳۵,۰۰۰. / Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۲): Muslim ۸۶.۰٪, of which (Sunni ۷۴.۰٪, 'Alawite (Shi'i) ۱۲.۰٪; Christian ۸.۹٪; Druze ۳.۰٪; other ۱.۰٪.(۸

Tajikistan: Population (۱۹۹۷): ۶,۱۱۲,۰۰۰./Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Sunni Muslim ۸۰.۰٪; .Shi'i Muslim ۵.۰٪; Russian Orthodox ۱.۵٪; Jewish ۰.۱٪; other (mostly nonreligious) ۱۳.۴٪

;Turkey: Population (١٩٩٨): ٦٤,٥٦٧,٠٠٠/Religious affiliation (١٩٩٤): Sunni Muslim c.٨٠.٠٪

p: ٥٥

.According to CWF, Shi'a constitute ٨٩٪ of the state's population -١

According to CWF, Shi'a comprise ٦٠٪-٦٥٪ and Sunni ٣٢٪-٣٧٪ of the total population. -٢ According to MEDEA, Muslims of Iraq are ٩٧٪, of which Shi'a Muslims are ٦٥٪ and Sunni Muslims are ٣٢٪. According to Fuller and Francke (١٩٩٩, p.٨٧), the Shi'a form ٥٥ to ٦٠ percent of the population of Iraq. It adds that since the late ١٩٧٠s Iraqi Shi'a have .been leaving Iraq in large numbers to settle in Iran, Syria, Britain and other countries

According to CWF, Suni Muslims are ٩٢٪, Christians are ٦٪ (majority Greek Orthodox, -٣ but some Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant denominations) and others are ٢٪ (several small .(.Shi'a Mus lim and Druze populations) (٢٠٠٠ est

According to CWF, Muslims comprise ٧٠٪ (including Shi'a, Sunni, Druze, Isma'ilite, -٤ Alawite or Nusayri). According to MEDEA, Muslims are ٧٠٪ (٥ legally recognized Islamic groups - Shi'a, Sunni, Druze, Isma'ilite, Alawite or Nusayri) and Christians are ٣٠٪ (١١ legally recognized Christian groups: ٤ Orthodox Christian, ٦ Catholic, ١ Protestant). Jews are in small percentage. According to Fuller and Francke (١٩٩٩, p. ٢٠٣), the Shi'a form ٣٠ to ٤٠ percent of the population and represent the single largest sectarian .group in Lebanon

According to CWF, Ibadhi Muslims are ٧٥٪ and the rest are Sunni Muslims, Shi'a -٥ Muslims and Hindus. According to MEDEA, Muslims are ٧٥٪ of whom three q uar ters .belongs to the Ibadi sect

According to CWF, Muslims are ٩٧٪ (Sunni ٧٧٪ and Shi'a ٢٠٪). Christians, Hindus, and -٦ others are ٣٪. According to Westerlund and Svanberg (١٩٩٩, p. ٢٢٥), Muslims make up more than ٩٦٪ of the total population. Among Muslims ١٥-٢٠ percent are estimated to .be Shi'a

CWF does not mention the percentage of Shi'a population in Saudi Arabia, though -٧ the number is higher than some other countries mentioned above. It just says that Muslims comprise ١٠٠٪ of the country's population. According to MEDEA, Shi'a are ٢.٥٪ of the total population and Sunni Muslims are ٩٧٪. According to Fuller and Francke

(۱۹۹۹, p.۱۸۰), the Saudi government places the Shi'a t around ۲ to ۳ percent of the population, in the neighborhood of ۳۰۰,۰۰۰, but the numbers are nonetheless probably .well over half a million

According to CWF, Sunni Muslim are ۷۴٪. Alawite, Druze, and other Mu lim sec ts are ۸- ۱۶٪. Christians (various sects) are ۱۰٪ and Jews are tiny comm unities in Damascus, Al Qam is hli, and Aleppo. According to MEDEA, Sunni Muslims are ۷۵٪, Alawi Muslims ۱۱٪, .Christians (all rites) ۱۰٪ and Druzes ۳٪

(Shi'i Muslim c.۱۹.۸٪, of which nonorthodox Alevi c.۱۴.۰٪; Christian c. ۰.۲٪. (۱

United Arab Population (۱۹۹۸): ۲,۷۴۴,۰۰۰./Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Muslim ۹۶.۰٪

.Emirates: (Sunni ۸۰.۰٪, Shi'i ۱۶.۰٪); other (Mostly Christian and Hindu) ۴.۰٪

Yemen: Population (۲۰۰۰): ۱۸,۲۶۰,۰۰۰. (۲) /Religious affiliation (۱۹۹۵): Muslim ۹۹.۹٪ (Sunni c. (۶۰.۰٪, Shi'i c. ۴۰.۰٪); other ۰.۱٪. (۳

The Shi'a population in some countries is disputed. Some believe that the population of the Shi'a there is much higher than official figures, because of a lack of accurate .statistics, or because of political problems

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p: ۵۶

CWF just states that ۹۹.۸٪ are Muslim (mostly Sunni) and others (Christians and -۱ Jews) are ۰.۲٪. Surprisingly, MEDEA report overlooks Shi’a population in Turkey and says: “Religions: Muslim ۹۹٪ Sunni, other ۱٪ (Christian and Jews)”. (http:// www.medea.be/en/ [۱۰] index ۰۵۹. htm) According to Westerlund and Svanberg (۱۹۹۹, p. ۱۳۳), Sunni Muslims are thought to be ۷۰ to ۸۰٪ of the population and the bulk of the .remaining ۲۰ ñ ۳۰٪ are Alevis

This is according to SESRTCIC affiliated to the Organization of Islamic Conference -۲ .((OIC

CWF just states: “Muslim including Shaf'i (Sunni) and Zaydi (Shi'a), small numbers of -۳ Jewish, Christian, and Hindu”. According to MEDEA, Sunni Muslims are ۵۵٪ and Zaydite .Muslims are ۴۴٪ and Christians are ۱٪

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:Note

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For further reading

Shia i Islam: Origins, Faith and Practices

by Mohammad A. Shomali

(London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies, ٢٠٠٣)

Muslims are divided into two major groups: the majority is called Sunni and the" second Shi'ite. What are the common features in virtue of which both groups are said

to follow the religion of Islam? What are the fundamental differences in doctrine and practice between these two groups? Such questions are answered clearly and intelligently in this book by a Shi’ite theologian and philosopher. This book will be of (interest to students of Islam and of religious studies generally.” (Dr. Legenhausen

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Islam: A Contribution to Religious Ethics

by Mrs. Mahnaz Heydarpoor

(London: New City ۲۰۰۲)

Her analysis of love in Christianity is scholarly and insightful, but it will be her" exposition of the centrality of love in Islamic theology and ethics that will be of .particular interest to many western readers, Christians and others

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ISBN: ۰ ۹۰۴۲۸۷ ۷۹ ۳

Introduction to Hadith

by 'Abd al-Hadi al-Fadli

Translated by Mrs. Nazmina Virjee

(London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies, ۲۰۰۲)

This work studies the origins and development of Hadith literature. It treats the subject of Hadith from different perspectives, such as the historical beginning of the science, the onset of Hadith literature, compilation of Hadith works, the terminology and methodology within the science itself, authenticity and weakness of traditions, .and the whole phenomenon of fabrication

The same publication also includes a translation of one of the classical texts on the science of Hadith, Dira yat al-Hadith, by the renowned tenth-century scholar al-Shahid al-Thani.

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Lady Fatima Masuma (A) of Qum

by Masuma Jaffer

(Qum: Jami'at al-Zahra, ۲۰۰۳)

This book attempts to chroncile her life, from her birth in

A.H in Madina, to her death, at the young age of ۲۸, in Qum. It includes her ۱۷۳ biography, education and narration of traditions. It also traces her journey from .Madina to Qum

Also included is the history and description of her

p: ۶۰

.shrine and a brief look at the city of Qum

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p: ۶۱

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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